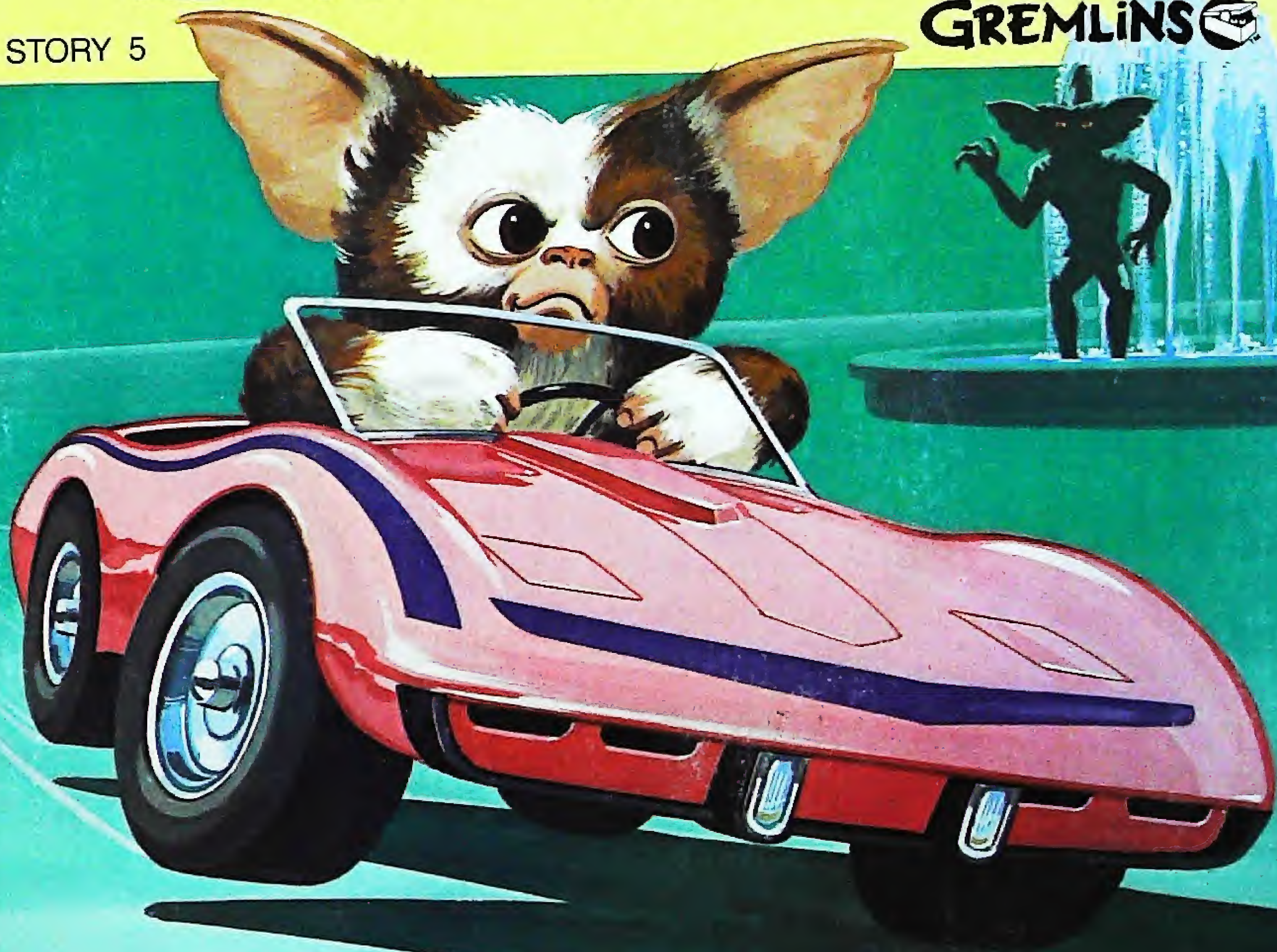


the LAST GREMLIN

STORY 5

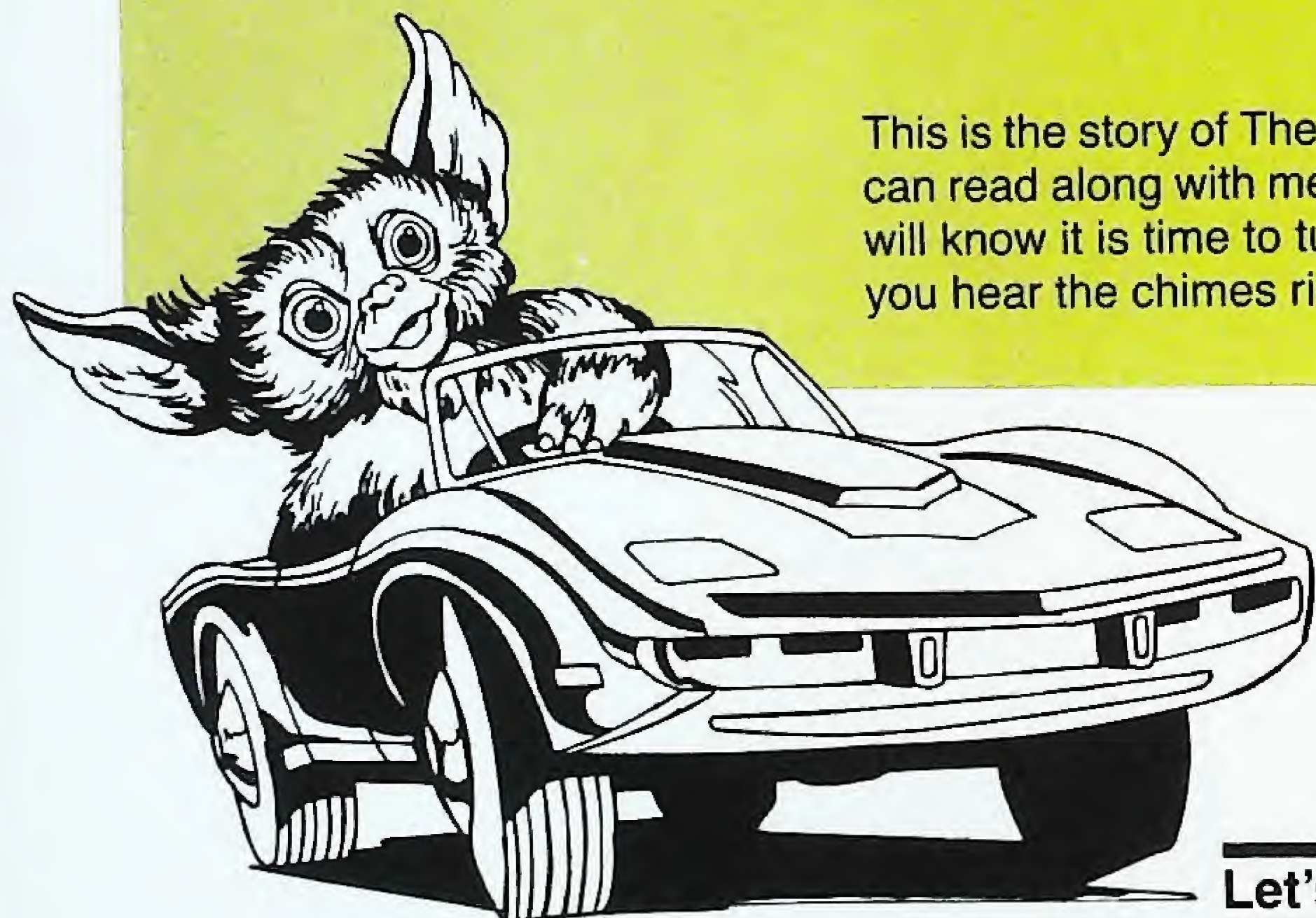
GREMLINS 



the LAST GREMLIN

Story 5

This is the story of The Last Gremlin. You can read along with me in your book. You will know it is time to turn the page when you hear the chimes ring like this...



Let's begin now:

© Warner Bros., Inc. 1984

Unless you're extremely careful, cute cuddly Mogwai can turn into nasty destructive Gremlins. And that's just what happened one Christmas eve in Kingston Falls. Hundreds of mischievous Gremlins had left the town in ruins. They had broken windows, caused traffic accidents, wrecked the local tavern and even crashed a snow plow into a house! Billy Peltzer, his girlfriend, Kate, and Billy's pet Mogwai, Gizmo, had tracked the creatures to the local movie theater, where they had hidden inside from the sun which could destroy them.



With Kate's help, Billy found a way to destroy the theater full of Gremlins. But his heart sank when Gizmo frantically gestured across the street. "Oh no! There's Stripe, the nastiest of the bunch, in front of the department store!"

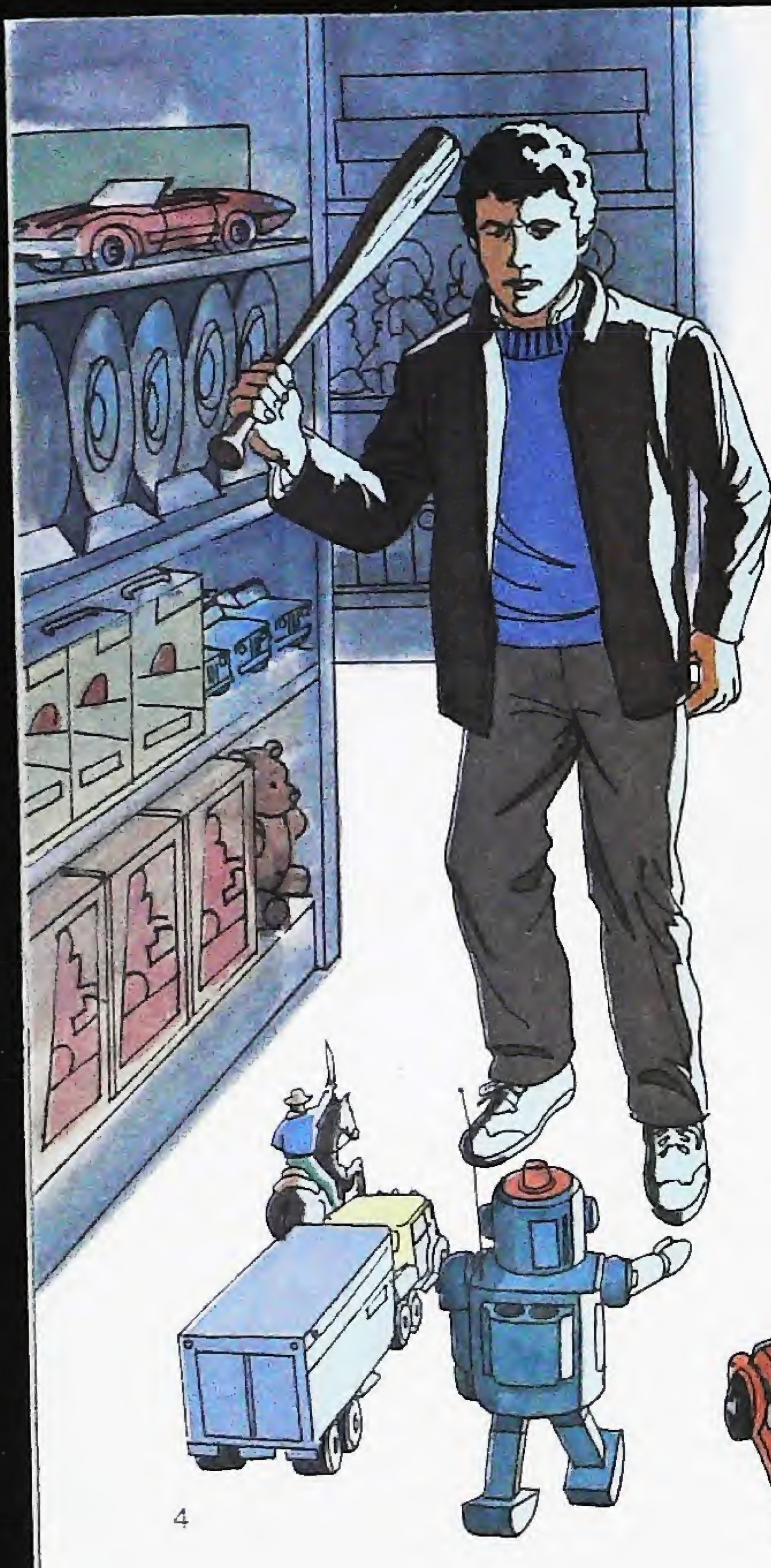
Stripe stared at the burning theater and then scowled at Billy. Kate shuddered at the vicious look in Stripe's eyes. "Look, he's heading into the store!"

Billy gritted his teeth. "I've got to go after him. He's the last Gremlin."



Billy and Kate raced across the street and climbed through a broken window. They tiptoed into the store. Billy handed his backpack to Kate. "You take Gizmo and find the lights." Billy grabbed a baseball bat and squared his shoulders, ready to face the sneaky Gremlin. Gizmo whined. "Sorry, little guy, I go alone on this one."

Kate gently touched his hand. "Be careful, Billy."
"I will." And with that, he crept into the darkness.



Slowly Billy edged his way from aisle to aisle in the dark, straining to hear or see some trace of Stripe. And then, not far from where he stood, Billy heard a buzz. He grasped his bat tighter and carefully moved toward the sound, inching toward the Toy Department. Suddenly, something attacked his feet! He leaped back. "Whew! It's only a toy robot!" A playful duck waddled toward him. A tiny soldier tottered in circles. A little train chugged into a wobbly bear. The whole floor was moving with toys! But there was no sign of Stripe.

Billy moved on, unaware that Stripe was hiding in the power tool section. Billy rounded the corner and stopped just in time! Out of nowhere came a circular saw blade, zooming past him! It dug itself into the wall. "That was close." Only a second later, out spun another blade! Billy swung fiercely and batted it aside, losing his balance and stumbling backward. Stripe cackled, mocking Billy.

In an instant, Billy picked himself up. "Come on out here, Stripe!" But Stripe was gone.



Billy followed the faint sound of Stripe's high pitched giggle across the store. But as he entered the TV-Stereo section there was only unnerving silence. Billy looked cautiously around. Hundreds of blank TV's stared back at him. Nothing moved.

Suddenly a television flashed on! Stripe's face snarled at Billy in a giant close-up! Billy angrily smashed the screen with his bat! "You might as well show yourself, Stripe! You can't hide behind a video camera forever!"

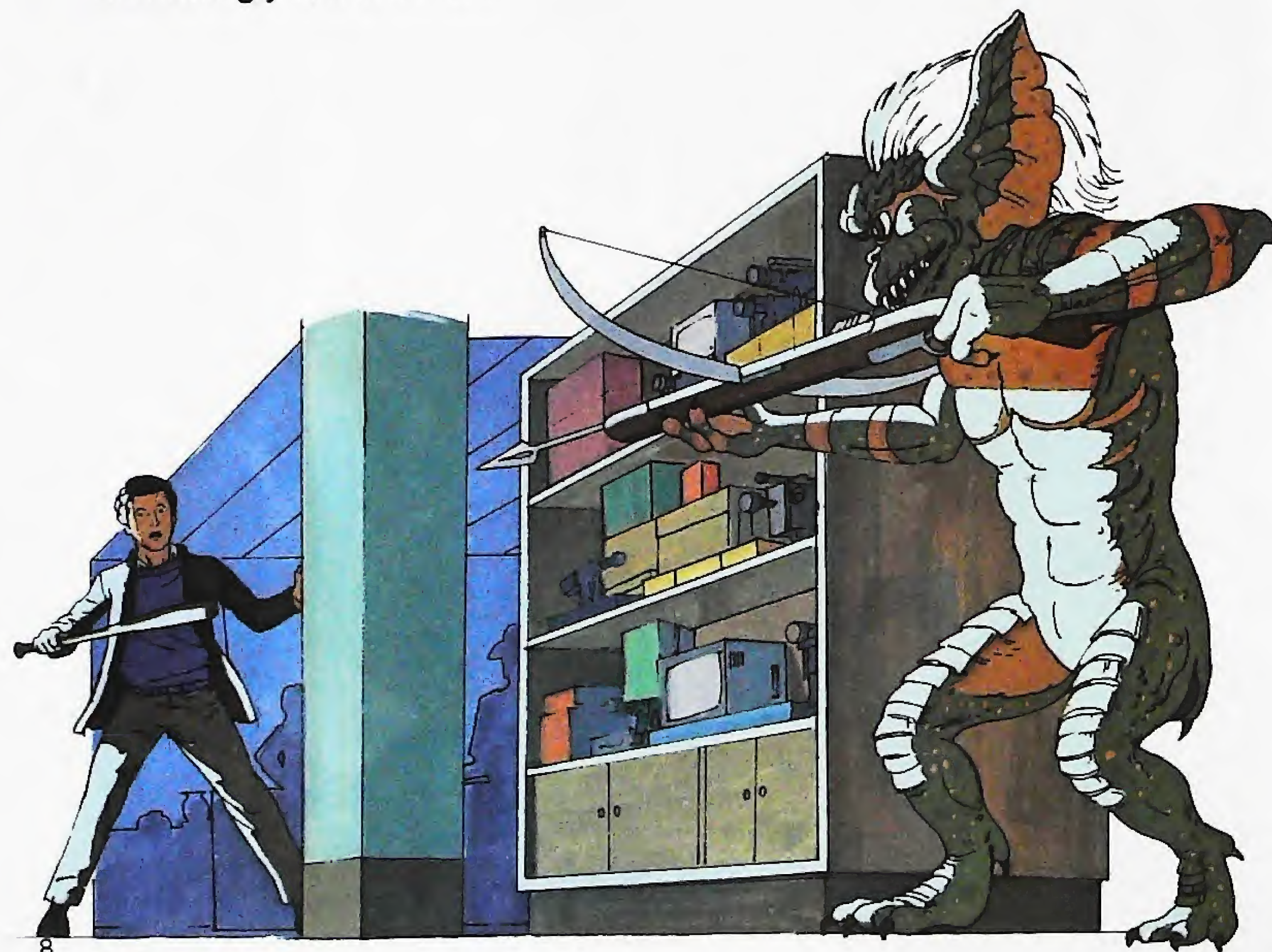
More TV's came to life. Everywhere Billy turned he saw Stripe's leering grin. "I'm sick of playing hide and seek, Stripe!"

The Gremlin gave one last cackle into the camera and disappeared. But this time, Billy spotted him as he scurried off.



Billy raced into the main aisle and stopped. Suddenly, Stripe zoomed in front of him on a tricycle, tripping him! The jeering Gremlin tore off into Sporting Goods with Billy not far behind.

Stripe quickly grabbed a cross bow. He turned and fired. Ducking, Billy threw himself painfully to the ground. Stripe wasted no time loading a second arrow. Billy lay hurt on the floor as Stripe stalked menacingly towards him.



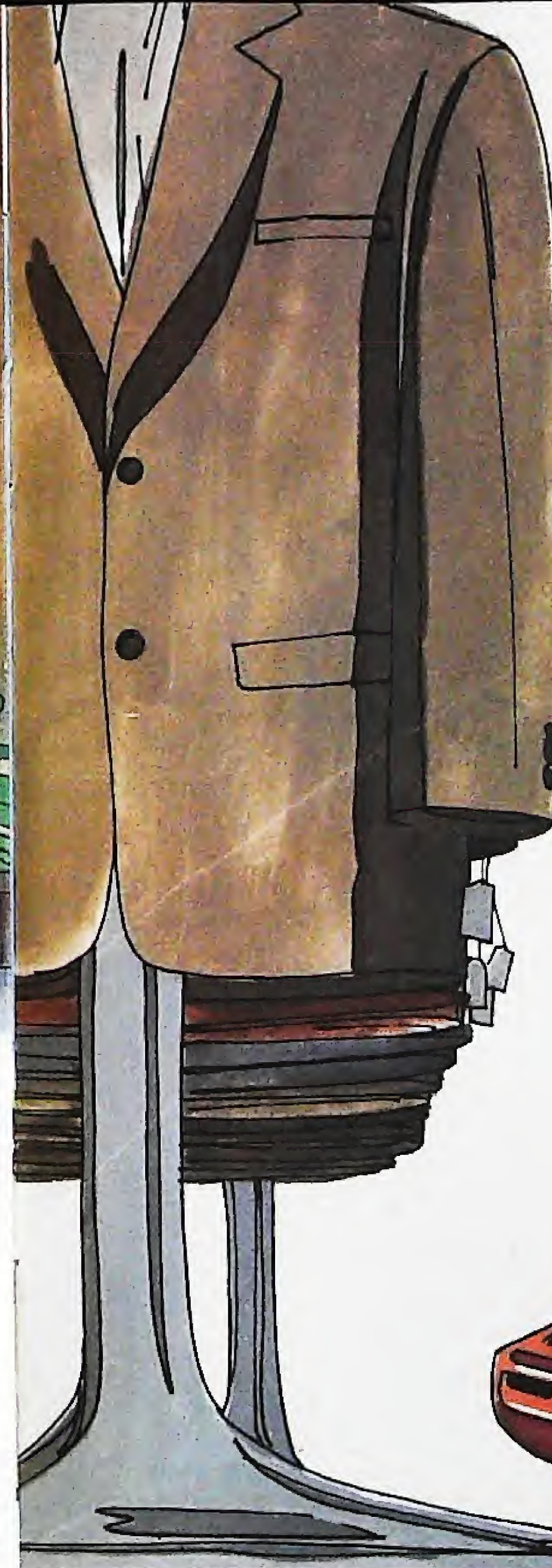
Meanwhile, Kate had found the control booth. "There are hundreds of switches, and I can't read all the labels! I guess I'll just turn everything on!" In an instant, the store came to life. Fans spun, saws whirled and dishwashers churned. But most importantly, the lights came on.

Stripe suddenly screeched in pain. He dropped his crossbow and covered his eyes. He floundered helplessly, looking for darkness. Billy stood up. "Good work, Kate! You've blinded him! Now we've got him!"



Then something strange happened. Stripe stopped short. His ears perked up. With sudden determination he darted off in the direction of the Garden Department. Billy was confused. "What's he doing now? Where's he going?!"

Then Billy heard what Stripe had heard, and he realized where the Gremlin was headed. "Oh, no! Kate, there's a huge electric water fountain in the greenhouse! Stripe's going to jump into the water! Turn it off or he'll multiply and soon there'll be hundreds more Gremlins!"



Kate frantically searched for the shut-off switch. "Which one could it be, Gizmo?" There was no response. "Gizmo? Oh, no! Gizmo's gone. Where'd he go?"

Stripe stood in triumph under the shower of water. Billy watched helplessly. Already bumps were forming on Stripe's body, and soon the bumps would turn into new Gremlins. And once the process started, no one could do anything to stop it.

Then, from out of nowhere, Gizmo raced toward the greenhouse in a toy car. Billy watched in amazement. "What's that little guy doing now?"





Gizmo sped around a corner and crashed into the greenhouse wall. The car flipped over and the tiny Mogwai rolled out. He looked feverishly around, then raced to the cord holding the canvas cover of the skylight. Using all his might he struggled to untie the knot. Then Gizmo's plan dawned on Billy. "Of course! He's going to blind Stripe by uncovering the skylight!"

Finally the cord released. The blind flew open, throwing Gizmo across the room. Sunlight poured into the room, bathing Stripe in its brilliant rays. Stripe screamed as his skin began to crack. The ugly bumps withered and he started to melt like a candle.

Kate rushed in and embraced Billy. "Oh, Billy, he's dead!"

"Yeah, thanks to Gizmo's help."

"Gizmo? Wait a minute — where is he?"

Billy spun around to find poor Gizmo lying motionless on the floor. He rushed over to his tiny friend and scooped him into his arms tenderly. "Gizmo, please be okay."

That night, the Peltzers had a peaceful Christmas Eve after all. The fireplace radiated a warm glow and bright decorations filled the house with joy. Exhausted and bruised, Billy rested on the couch with Kate and Gizmo. He petted the injured Mogwai as he pulled a thermometer out of his mouth. "You're gonna be okay. Your temperature's back to normal."

The Peltzers settled comfortably around the TV to watch a news report tell the story of the Gremlin invasion. Suddenly the doorbell rang. Gizmo's eyes lit up and he began to hum contentedly. Billy realized who it must be. "I'll bet it's the Chinaman, Gizmo's original owner!" And sure enough, an ancient, withered Chinese man entered through the door. Gizmo jumped from the couch and embraced the old man tightly. Billy was happy for Gizmo but sad for himself. "Yeah, Gizmo, you really do belong with him, don't you?"

The old man was stern. "You have done with Mogwai what your society has done with all nature's gifts. You people do not understand. You are not ready."



Billy nodded to the Chinese man in sad recognition. Then the old man gently placed Gizmo into a small wooden box and turned to leave. But a sound from the box made him stop. He opened the lid, and Gizmo peeked out, his tiny eyes searching for his friend. "Bye, Bil-ly." Billy grinned. He knew that Gizmo would never forget him.

As the old man stepped outside, he smiled at Billy. "Someday you may be ready." He turned and headed off, and Billy could hear the faint sounds of Gizmo humming the tune he and the Mogwai had once shared.



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